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S. G. Miller to H. R. Miller (3 July 1863)

Susan G. Miller

Hugh R. Miller

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Curranland Co; Va. ^(Friday) July 3rd 1863.

My precious Husband,

Your truly welcome letter of the 23rd June has been received on Monday last. I had just written to my dear Robert as I had received no letter from home, deferred answering you until today hoping to get some news from home to write you. For this I have been disappointed as no letters have reached me since the reception of Minnie's of which I have written you. Your last letter is confirmatory of my fears and since you were ordered up to Fredericksburg, & a feeling of perfect helpless despair is the natural consequence. I know it is useless to fret over what cannot be helped & I am constantly tempted to pray for perfect oblivion to transfer me. I find it hard hard indeed to be resigned to the suffering & lack of all that makes life endurable. But God knows what is best for me for them, & all that I can do is to pray for His will to continue over them. I ought not to try to write & would not did I not know it is a comfort & all the evil that is in my power to give.

I thank you & my poor children for writing to me & although I know it to be a tax upon your time & strength, hope as long as you are spared you will grant me this boon. My letters are but a poor recompense for your trouble. Absorbed as my whole being is in this great trouble it would be hard to find anything outside of sufficient interest to think of even I more fortunately situated & here in this dark corner, with nothing to see or hear but the gossip of strangers - whose opinions cannot be relied on - the task of writing a letter at any time would be great. I can't imagine why it is that no letters are coming from home - unless the mails have been delayed by the destruction of those bridges in Tenn - & the interruption of the communication between Petersburg & Richmond, by the falling in of a bridge.

The telegrams from the South West don't give any account of roads through our section of Country, & I hope our friends have not again

been visited by these demons. The alarm for
the safety of Richmond & demonstrations of the
Abolitionists in that direction, have stirred up
patriotic defenders in this region of Country.
There was a man through here on Monday from
below somewhere trying to make up a company, but
I have heard of but two who volunteered, Conson
John Clarke & a little boy. When they are going to orga-
ize I don't know. The papers of Richmond bear
wonderfully of their feeling of security & the patri-
-ism of its Citizen defenders & claim to have been
the first to set an example of refusing to surrender.
But I rather think they are mistaken. It seems
to me the first defiance came from our own little
Sibrattle, after the first battle of Manassas. But we
can afford to let Virginia puff her own glory, trusting
to a faithful history recording the whole Confed-
-eracy its due share. I am often reminded of Prussia
with, in reading what these people write & listening
to what they say. The Richmond Whig is the uni-
-versal paper here - the Dispatch occasionally seen.
I take the Engineer which is regarded as an
indemnitarian almost. You can form some idea
from this of the politics of this whole people.
They will all be the touch of Southernism when
the battles are fought, one Independence gained
& they make rich upon the life blood of our
Soldiers Martyrs. The heroism of their youthful
offspring may save them from the contempt so
justly merited. My Winkfords are anxious for you
to know my young Cousin who are with
Genl Smith in the 3rd Va. Cav. & I should be
glad for them to find you out. The news is still
favorable from Vicksburg & Port Hudson, but I see
the Whig & Dispatch are beginning to feel some
restlessness at the delay of Genl Johnston. My
breath almost stops when I think of them being ab-
solutely defeated there. What a momentous moment
is this - our very existence depending the result
of these few weeks or perhaps days. What the
designs of Genl Lee & what the base of his hopes
in this grand advance? Even now the contest
may be decided. The Yankees write boastfully
confidently, & could we believe them, we might
well grieve at the prospect before us. The prayers
of our advance seems to be marked with little
opposition up to our last accounts - but may
not this be the forerunner of disaster to us?

Our fathers speak hopefully - but oh the anguish
individually felt by those whose every hope
hangs suspended thus. It is easy for those
who have no personal ties involved to speak
encouragingly, but to the poor wife & mother
there is no relief. The fever of excitement never
abates. If to be patriotic, we must be totally
indifferent in sympathy & expression, I am
no patriot. Although you are all in the path of
duty, & just where I think every man should be
I cannot but grieve to think of your sufferings and
dangers, cannot but dread that our glorious
Independence will possibly be bought with the
sacrifice of those priceless lives. My dear Mother
although I hope & pray I sometimes feel great
confidence that God in His infinite mercy
will spare you & my precious children, yet I
cannot be insensible to the possibility that one
or all may be taken from me, & soon that you
are so far removed the last earthly comfort of
getting to you or getting all that should be left
is well nigh gone. But my blessed Redeemer
has said, "Ask, & ye shall receive," I shall try to
exercise faith in His precious promises & trust
Him to spare you altogether. If we should be
destined to meet no more on earth, I trust we
may form an united family above. My darling
Sons for whom I suffer the pangs of giving
them birth - Could patriotism swallow up
all feeling for them? And I twenty sons, I should
blush to think that one of them would shrink
from the path they are treading - but this could not
diminish the thoughts of their sacrifice. Far be it
from my wishes to say or do any thing to
discourage or depress any of you & I do not
think any expression of feeling or anxiety
would have that effect upon any of you.

If your hearts are fixed upon God, I know
your sacrifices & sufferings will but make
you happier hereafter more complete.
The joys of Heaven will be all the more bright
from the stormy path trodden in getting there.

I regret most sincerely the death of young Fisher. He was a noble youth & I have neither most sincerely he might be spared to enjoy the arm throne of his old traitor uncle.

I am glad you met with dear John & hope he may be thrice as near you during this Campaign. From what John has wrote me I inferred that Willy Cook had gotten off on detail & would return in thirty days. I am thankful the poor boy has been permitted to see home once more. God grant that this Campaign may end in peace & the day speedily come when you may be permitted to return.

What becomes of your sick - or what will become of the convalescent? Are they sent back to this State? What is the occupation given you in Maryland? & what have you done with Patrick?

My old Aunt & Cousins send much love to you & hope you may yet be able to come & see them. The weather here is extremely hot although there has been rain almost every day for more than a week. The wheat crops much injured by the warm damps weather. I hope you get plenty palatable food wherever you may be.

Oh how glad I should be to know how & where you are today. Time drags so heavily fearfully along. Is Aunt Davis with you or has he given up his command entirely to Stone? Tell my dear George I will write him by the next mail. I hope them to have some news from home to give you. Take care of yourself & my dear children & of if any thing befall you or them & there is any possible chance for me to get to you, let me come for mercies sake. Give my love to my precious boys - tell them if a Mother's prayers avail aught, they will be carried safely through these horrors. Remember me to Oliver Col Moody & all friends, not forgetting Patrick & may God bless, comfort, guide & protect you, is the constant prayer of your loving wife,
S. L. Miller -

Sunny Side
July 4th July 3 1863



Col Hugh R. Miller,
42nd Regt Missi
Davis' Brigade, Rott's Division, A.P. Hill's Corp
Richmond,
Virginia.